

REMARKS

Claims 13-17 are currently pending in this application. Claim 18 has been withdrawn. The undersigned affirms the selection of the invention of Group I (claims 13-17) for prosecution in this application.

Claims 13 and 15-17 stand rejected as being allegedly anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,814,176 to Proulx. Claim 14 stands rejected as being unpatentable over Proulx in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,607,509 to Schrenk, further in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,540,537 to Kamp.

The undersigned submits that none of the cited references disclose or suggest a system configured to form at least two elementary filaments, the first opening and the second opening further configured such that a bead of the polymer material exiting a die opening in the group contacts with at least one other bead of polymer material exiting another die opening in the group as recited in claim 13. Likewise, none of the cited references disclose or suggest a die plate in a system configured such that polymer from the die exiting the first opening forms a first bead and polymer from the die exiting the second opening forms a second bead, wherein the first bead and the second bead are in contact with one another as recited in claims 16 and 17. Consequently, each of the pending claims are patentable over the cited references.

As for Proulx, this reference purports to describe the production of a double strand filament for use in a flexible line trimmer. A supply of nylon is stated to be disposed in a hopper in communication with a die having pairs of apertures (col. 3, lines 44-47; Fig. 6). Proulx states that molten nylon is extruded through these die pairs to form molten filaments which are directed downward into a quench tank containing water. Proulx further states that the filament pairs are then pressed together in order to initiate the formation of a weld (col. 4, lines 19-39) wherein the initial bonding or contact point is below the surface of the water in a quench tank.

By comparison the claims recite a die plate system configured to have beads of polymer contacting one another. As is clear from Fig. 6, Proulx does not even consider bonding filaments at the bead stage. While beads are shown to have formed at apertures 32 of the die, the filaments are not brought together until the cross-sectional diameters of strands 12 and 14 have stabilized down stream. Therefore, the method and apparatus described by Proulx requires the use of raised annular ridges 36 which guide the strands together. No such guides are needed in the invention disclosed by Applicants. Instead, Applicants have configured the die openings to specifically

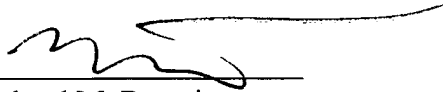
take advantage of the bead stage for bonding the filaments. This eliminates the need for the added mechanisms used by Proulx.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above remarks the Applicants respectfully assert that each of the pending claims are in condition for allowance and, therefore, requests reconsideration and withdrawal of all outstanding rejections and allowance of all pending claims.

Respectfully submitted,

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